

CLAIMS

1. A method of producing a vehicle mat comprising the steps of:
providing a sheet of thermoplastic material, said sheet having a first and second side, said second side having a plurality of nibs extending therefrom;
locating said sheet in proximity with a contoured molding tool, said first side directed toward said tool and said second side directed away from said tool;
heating said sheet; and
drawing said sheet toward said tool until said sheet is substantially shaped to the contour of said tool.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said thermoplastic material is a thermoplastic elastomer.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said sheet is drawn toward said tool by differential pressure.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said vacuum pressure is applied through vacuum apertures in said tool.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said tool is a male tool.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said male tool includes a contoured form upstanding from a flat base.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said sheet is a blank for producing at least one mat.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of cooling said sheet and removing said sheet from said tool.

Sub B2

9. A method of producing a plastic vehicle mat comprising the steps of:

~~extruding a sheet of thermoplastic material between a pair of rollers wherein one of~~

said rollers has a plurality of indentions to form nibs on a first side of the sheet;

locating said sheet in proximity with a contoured male molding tool, said first side directed away from said tool;

heating said sheet to a plastic state; and

drawing said sheet toward said male molding tool until said sheet is substantially shaped to correspond to the contour of said tool.

Sub B1

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said thermoplastic material is a thermoplastic elastomer.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein said thermoplastic elastomer is a blend of a linear low density polyethylene and thermoplastic elastomers.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein said sheet is drawn toward said tool by vacuum pressure.

Sub B3

13. A method of producing a part comprising the steps of:

providing a sheet of thermoplastic material, said sheet having a first and second side, said second side having a plurality of nibs extending therefrom;

locating said sheet in proximity with a contoured molding tool, said first side directed toward said tool and said second side directed away from said tool;

heating said sheet; and

drawing said sheet toward said tool until said sheet is substantially shaped to the contour of said tool.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein said thermoplastic material is a thermoplastic elastomer.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein said thermoplastic material is a blend of a linear low density polyethylene and a thermoplastic elastomer.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein said sheet is drawn toward said tool by differential pressure.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein said vacuum pressure is applied through vacuum apertures in said tool.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein said tool is a male tool.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein said male tool includes a contoured form upstanding from a flat base.

20. The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of cooling said sheet and removing said sheet from said tool.

21. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of extruding a sheet between a pair of rollers wherein one of said rollers has a plurality of indentions to form nibs on a first side of the sheet.